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# Negotiating a Path to Professional Efficacy: A Narrative Analysis of the Experiences of Four Pre-Service Educators

by

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## Abstract

Often studies examining the development of a sense of professional efficacy in pre-service educators are concerned with either the systemic viewpoint of teacher education programmes or the relationship between the perceptions of pre-service educators and what is "really" happening in the classroom. The intent of this study is to investigate the question "What do pre-service educators perceive that they know and that they need to know to develop a sense of professional efficacy? solely from the vantage point of the pre-service educator. The study encompasses two specific objectives:

- to identify through narrative analysis the circumstances of the construction of and the content of the knowledge created by the pre-service educators from their experiences
- to investigate and describe the relationship of the knowledge constructed by the pre-service educators to the development of a sense of professional efficacy.

The study attempts to produce an in-depth qualitative description of the explicit and sometimes tacit perceptions of four pre-service educators as they prepared to begin professional careers. Four pre-service educators enrolled in a recently developed innovative Post Graduate Certificate of Education programme at a large urban university in South Africa participated in the study over a two year period. The perceptions of the pre-service educators are presented through an analysis of the narratives taken from interviews and reflective journal entries. The narratives are analyzed using a variety of narrative inquiry methods which were investigated and described as part of this study. The interpretation of the narratives is also informed by theoretical constructs such as professional efficacy and knowledge and private theory. Through the analysis and interpretation of the narratives the unique and individual nature of learning to become an educator as well as similarities of experience were revealed. Ultimately the broad aim of this study through the use of narrative inquiry methodology and methods is to add the "voices" of these pre-service educators to a larger dialogue and to the collective body of evidence of how one learns to become an educator with a sense of professional efficacy.


Key words: professional efficacy, narrative inquiry, abstract knowledge, practical knowledge, private theory, belief, collision, literary analysis methods, performative methods, structural analysis methods

University of Pretoria etd – Rogan, A I (2005)

# Table of Contents


| | Page |
|---|---|
| **Chapter One The Research Story** | |
| Choosing the Research Path | 7 |
| **Chapter Two A Theoretical Path to Professional Efficacy** | |
| Introduction | 12 |
| Rationale for the Development of a Theoretical Path to Professional Efficacy | 15 |
| Beginning the Construction of a Theoretical Path | 17 |
| Theoretical Positioning | 17 |
| Approaching Professional Efficacy from the Positivist Position | 18 |
| Approaching Professional Efficacy from the Post Modernist/Constructivist Position | 19 |
| Widening the Theoretical Path | 22 |
| Practical Considerations | 22 |
| The Characteristics of Knowledge | 22 |
| Individualized and Experienced Knowledge | 23 |
| Tacit and Implied Knowledge | 25 |
| The Spheres of Knowledge | 26 |
| Practical Knowledge | 26 |
| Abstract Knowledge | 27 |
| Private Theories | 28 |
| A Conceptualization of Professional Efficacy | 29 |
| Chapter Summary | 33 |
| **Chapter Three Preparing to Listen to the Stories: The Research Design** | |
| Narrative Inquiry Methodology | 36 |
| Research Methods | 37 |
| The Preliminary Study | 39 |
| The Research Procedure | 47 |
| Participant Narrators | 47 |
| Narrative Data Collection | 48 |

Chapter Summary 50

**Chapter Four Listening to the Stories Part One: Classrooms, Collisions and Private Theories**

Introduction 52
Nerine's Story 55
Disa's Story 65
Erica's Story 77
Jak's Story 96
Chapter Summary 115

**Chapter Four Listening to the Stories Part Two: Professional Efficacy and Knowledge**

Introduction 118
Professional Efficacy as Transformation and Coherence 120
Nerine 121
Professional Efficacy as Transformation and Independence 128
Disa 129
Jak 137
Professional Efficacy as Worthiness 144
Erica 145
Chapter Summary 151

**Chapter Five Conclusions and Reflections: Learning from the Stories**

Using Narrative Inquiry Methods 155
Creation of a Body of Knowledge 157
The Role of the Mentors 160
Research Challenges 162
In Conclusion 163

References 164

University of Pretoria etd – Rogan, A I (2005)

Appendix 170

# List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Theoretical Paths to Professional Efficacy…… 14

Figure 2: Constructing Private Theories…… 117

Figure 3: The Path to Professional Efficacy……. 152

Table 1: Influences of the Performative Cluster of Methods…… 42

Table 2: Structural Analysis Methods Cluster…….. 44

Table 3: Literary Analysis Methods Cluster……. 46

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